



THE SOUTHERN INSTITUTE
on Children and Families

Action Plan to Improve Access
to Child Care Assistance
for Low-Income Families

Survey Results on the
Status of State
Implementation Efforts

February 2002

Alabama
Arkansas
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maryland
Mississippi
Missouri
North Carolina
Oklahoma
South Carolina
Tennessee
Texas
Virginia
West Virginia

SOUTHERN REGIONAL INITIATIVE ON CHILD CARE

**Action Plan to Improve Access to Child Care Assistance
for Low-Income Families**

Survey Results on the Status of State Implementation Efforts

February 2002

List of States Responding

**Alabama
Arkansas
District of Columbia
Georgia
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maryland
Mississippi
Missouri
North Carolina
Oklahoma
South Carolina
Tennessee
Texas
West Virginia**



Southern Regional Initiative on Child Care: Action Plan to Improve Access to Child Care Assistance for Low-Income Families in the South

Survey Results on the Status of State Implementation Efforts

Background

The Action Plan to Improve Access to Child Care Assistance for Low-Income Families in the South expresses the position of the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care that bold action is needed to make child care financial aid available and accessible for low-income parents who need and seek it. The 10 goals and 52 action steps call on public and private sector leaders to support specific initiatives, including significant increases in child care resources, eligibility simplification, improved customer service, implementation of tax strategies and creation of employer partnerships.

The Southern Institute on Children and Families conducted this survey to provide states the opportunity to report efforts made toward the implementation of the Action Plan goals and action steps outlined in the *Sound Investments* report.

The surveys were sent to Task Force members appointed by the Governors of 16 southern states and the mayor of the District of Columbia. A response was not received from Florida in time for publication. Delaware's position to the Task Force has been vacant since January 2001 thus Delaware did not participate in the survey. In January 2000, Virginia declined to participate as a member of the Southern Regional Initiative on Child Care and thus no information is included on Virginia.

Survey respondents were asked to complete each section of the survey by entering actions taken on or after January 2000. For actions addressed prior to January 1, 2000 respondents were asked to include an approximate date of implementation. A copy of the survey introduction and instructions are included in this report.

Also included is a chart that displays the results of state implementation efforts at a glance. Results are reported as "**Action Step Completed**," "**Action Taken Toward Goal**," or "**No Action Reported**." Respondents were asked to enter N/A or "Not Applicable" if no action was taken to accomplish the action step. Action steps reported by states as completed prior to January 1, 2000 are presented in bold and italics. States do not appear on the chart if no response was entered on the survey. The following state reports reflect implementation efforts as of September 2001.



Southern Regional Initiative on Child Care: Action Plan to Improve Access to Child Care Assistance for Low-Income Families in the South

Survey of Implementation Efforts

Survey Introduction:

This survey is being conducted by the Southern Institute on Children and Families to identify the status of efforts being made to implement the Goals and Action Steps outlined in the December 2000 report of the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care, titled *Sound Investments: Financial Support for Child Care Builds Workforce Capacity and Promotes School Readiness*. The survey is being sent to Task Force members appointed by Governors of 16 southern states and the Mayor of the District of Columbia.

We have created the survey in an electronic format to facilitate the entry and tabulation of responses. Please enter the status of your state's implementation efforts under each action step and return the survey to us no later than Monday, September 24th. We will greatly appreciate receiving responses earlier, but we recognize that you will need to engage a number of persons in the preparation of your responses.

Survey responses will be included in a report to be distributed at the Southern Regional Forum on Child Care on October 10-11, 2001 in Atlanta. It is our intent to print your status comments as written. In the event we do not receive your response, a notation will indicate that the information is not available. **Please be advised that we will be unable to include status comments received after September 24 in the report.**

The time frame for your responses should reflect actions taken on or after January 1, 2000. If your state has already addressed the action step, please note the action taken and the approximate date. Questions regarding the survey should be directed to Zenovia Vaughn, Deputy Director for Child Care at (803) 779-2607 or zenovia@kidsouth.org.

Survey Instructions:

The survey is a "Microsoft Word™ for Windows" document. Enter your responses in the appropriate text boxes, save a copy of the file for your personal records, and e-mail the completed Word™ document to Zenovia Vaughn at zenovia@kidsouth.org.

**Southern Regional Initiative on Child Care
 Action Plan to Improve Access to Child Care Assistance
 for Low-Income Families in the South
 State Implementation Status**

GOAL 1: Federal, state, local and private funds should be sufficient to meet 100% of need for direct child care assistance, based on initial eligibility levels at 85% of the state median income. Redetermination levels should allow families to retain child care assistance until they reach 100% of the state median income.			
Action Steps	Action Step Completed	Action Taken Toward Goal	No Action Reported
1.1. Educate federal and state policy makers on the need for action.		AL, AR, DC, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, MO, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, WV	
1.2. Educate the business community on the need for leadership in achieving state, federal and community resources to meet 100% of need.		AL, AR, DC, GA, KY, MD, MS, NC, OK , SC, TN, TX	LA, MO
1.3. Increase federal funding for the Child Care and Development Fund to fulfill current policy allowing federal matching funds for child care assistance up to 85% of the state median income.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
1.4. Increase state funding to provide child care subsidies to all eligible families who seek child care assistance.		AL, AR, DC, GA, KY, MD, MS, MO, OK, SC, TN, WV	LA, NC, TX
1.5. Mobilize federal, state and community resources in support of families who need child care assistance.		AL, AR, DC, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, MO, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, WV	
GOAL 2: States and communities should broaden their child care eligibility and subsidy policies to meet the economic, work and education needs of families.			
Action Steps	Action Step Completed	Action Taken Toward Goal	No Action Reported
2.1. Establish co-payments not to exceed 10% of gross family income.	AL, DC, GA, KY, MD, MS, MO, <i>NC</i> , SC, WV	OK, TN	AR, LA, TX
2.2. Provide child care assistance to students who qualify under the income guidelines. (A state's definition of "student" may include but is not limited to adults in school full-time or job training programs. See state status reports for complete descriptions.)	AL, AR, DC , KY, LA , MD, MS, MO, <i>NC</i> , SC, TN, WV	GA, OK , TX	
2.3. Explore broad use of income exemptions to address affordability of child care.	AR, DC, OK , SC	AL, GA, KY, LA , MD, MS, MO, NC, TN, WV	TX
2.4. Eliminate asset testing (e.g. automobile or savings account) from criteria for child care assistance.	AL , AR, DC , GA , KY , LA , MD , MS , MO , NC , OK , SC , TN , TX , WV		
2.5. Index income eligibility levels for inflation.	AR, MD, SC	DC, NC, TN	AL, GA, KY, LA, MS, MO, OK, TX

Notes:

- State respondents were asked to report actions taken on or after January 1, 2000. For actions addressed prior to January 1, 2000, respondents were asked to provide an approximate date. Respondents were asked to enter "N/A" or "Not Applicable" if no action was taken. Action Steps reported by states as completed prior to January 1, 2000 are presented in bold and italics.
- Data is not reported for Florida, Delaware and Virginia. A response was not received from Florida in time for publication. Delaware's position to the Task force has been vacant since January 2001 thus Delaware did not participate in the survey. In January 2000, Virginia declined to participate as a member of the Southern Regional Initiative on Child Care and thus no information is included on Virginia.
- States will not appear on the State Status Results chart if no response was entered on the survey.

**Southern Regional Initiative on Child Care
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State Implementation Status**

GOAL 3: Outreach initiatives should be designed and aggressively implemented to assure that families have accessible and easy-to-understand information on child care assistance and are provided assistance in applying.			
Action Steps	Action Step Completed	Action Taken Toward Goal	No Action Reported
3.1. Provide information on child care subsidies through multiple sources, venues and the media.	AL, DC, KY, MD, MS, MO, TX, WV	AR, GA, LA, NC, OK, SC, TN	
3.2. Ensure that information is accurate, family friendly, employer friendly, culturally sensitive and provided in multiple languages, as appropriate.		AL, AR, DC, KY, LA, MD, MS, MO, NC, SC, TX	GA, OK, TN
3.3. Present information in a manner that would remove the stigma associated with receiving subsidies.	AR, MD, MS, SC, WV	DC, KY, LA, MO, NC, OK, TX	AL, GA, TN
3.4. Provide literature and assistance to help parents make informed provider choices.	AL, AR, DC, GA, MS, MO, OK, SC, TX, WV	KY, LA, MD, NC, TN	
3.5. Coordinate ongoing and strategic outreach activities among common organizations and providers.	DC, MD, MO, SC, TX	AL, AR, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, TN, WV	GA
3.6. Offer cross-training and information to providers, community organizations, faith organizations and state agencies to inform them about child care assistance programs and how to assist families in filing applications.	AL, AR, DC, MO, OK, SC, TX, WV	KY, LA, MD, MS, NC	GA, TN
GOAL 4: The child care application and redetermination processes should be uncomplicated and family friendly.			
Action Steps	Action Step Completed	Action Taken Toward Goal	No Action Reported
4.1. Simplify applications for child care assistance.	AL, DC, MD, MS, MO, OK, SC, TX	AR, GA, KY, LA, NC	TN
4.2. Allow filing by mail, phone, fax or internet.	AR, TX	AL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, MO, NC, OK, SC	DC, TN
4.3. Minimize requests for documentation at initial application and utilize documents already on file.	AL, DC, MD, MO, OK	AR, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TX	TN
4.4. Provide applications at multiple sites.	AL, AR, DC, MO, OK, TX	GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, SC, WV	TN
4.5. Offer non-conventional hours of operation for eligibility offices and provide toll-free phone lines to include evening and weekend hours.		AL, DC, GA, KY, MD, MS, MO, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX	AR, LA
4.6. Explore presumptive eligibility or otherwise provide immediate eligibility contingent upon final approval.		AR, GA, KY, LA, MS, OK, SC, TX	AL, DC, MD, MO, NC, TN
4.7. Eliminate requirements for a face-to-face interview both for initial application and for redetermination.	KY, LA, MD, MS, MO, NC, OK, SC, TX	AL, AR	DC, GA, TN
4.8. Provide consultation on making appropriate choices when excessive requests for provider changes are filed.	AL, AR, DC, GA, MD, NC, TX, WV	KY, MO, SC, TN	LA, MS, OK

Notes:

- State respondents were asked to report actions taken on or after January 1, 2000. For actions addressed prior to January 1, 2000, respondents were asked to provide an approximate date. Respondents were asked to enter "N/A" or "Not Applicable" if no action was taken. Action Steps reported by states as completed prior to January 1, 2000 are presented in bold and italics.
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